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SCIENCE

FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 1912

SOME BIOCHEMICAL PROBLEMS IN BACTERIOLOGY¹

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THE Society of American Bacteriologists stands, primarily, for pure as distinguished from applied bacteriology. In these days when the applications of the science are becoming so immensely important, and therefore so enticing to the investigator, there is danger that our thoughts turn not often enough to the broader aspect of the science, upon which, as a foundation, all of its applications must ultimately rest. We as a society must make it our special duty to see that these foundations are laid broad and firm, upon the very bed rock of truth itself.

We have as a society been interested for some time in the preparation of standard and uniform methods of describing bacterial species. This is of fundamental importance, leading as it does to uniformity of method and completeness and comparability of results. When we couple with this the use of the standard methods of the laboratory section of the American Public Health Association we have gone a long way toward the standardization of our work, and have begun the foundation upon which can be built the science of pure bacteriology.

But we must ever beware that we become not slaves to standardization and uniformity. It is well enough to proceed by standard methods, but we must not be tied by them. We must ever be ready to abandon the old and adopt the new, when the new marks the way of progress.

¹ President's address before the Society of American Bacteriologists at the Washington meeting, December 28, 1911.